

STARBLAZER

A dynamic illustration of two astronauts in a dark, cavernous space. The astronaut in the foreground is wearing a white and red spacesuit with a complex control panel on the chest and a helmet with a clear visor. He is holding a futuristic blaster in his right hand, which is raised. The astronaut in the background is also in a similar suit, holding a blaster and looking towards the left. The background is dark with some faint light sources and a thin, curved line suggesting a cable or a distant object.

SPACE FICTION
ADVENTURE IN
PICTURES No. 17

12p

AUS 40c NZ

THE CAVERNS OF KORAD

STARBLAZER



Throughout the Galaxy spin many dead planets. Some have never had life, some life was destroyed by war or weather. Some have forms of life unrecognised by others—and some have secret, concealed life. Such was the case with *The Caverns of Korad*.

The CAVERNS of KORAD

ON A ROUTINE VISIT TO STARGROUP CETUS, THE GALACTIC FEDERATION WARSHIP, PEGASUS, PICKED UP A GARBLED MESSAGE.

MAY-DAY CALL, SIR. IT'S
COMING FROM THE PLANET
KORAD.

ASSIST...
URGENT...
DISTRESS

PINPOINT ITS
POSITION.



4
PAUL NEVE, SKIPPER OF PEGASUS, CHECKED OUT THE PLANET WITH HIS SECOND IN COMMAND, MENKAR ORG, FROM THE PLANET MENKAR.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT KORAD?


A CLASS 6 PLANET. ATMOSPHERE SIMILAR TO EARTH. NO KNOWN LIFE FORM. UNSTABLE STRUCTURE. UNSUITABLE FOR COLONISATION.

THAT MAYDAY IS FROM STARFIRE! IT MUST BE THE FREIGHTER THAT WENT MISSING A YEAR AGO.




PEGASUS DRIFTED LOW OVER THE BURNT
OUT SHELL OF STARFIRE.

THERE SHE IS. LOOKS LIKE
SHE'S TAKEN A HAMMERING.

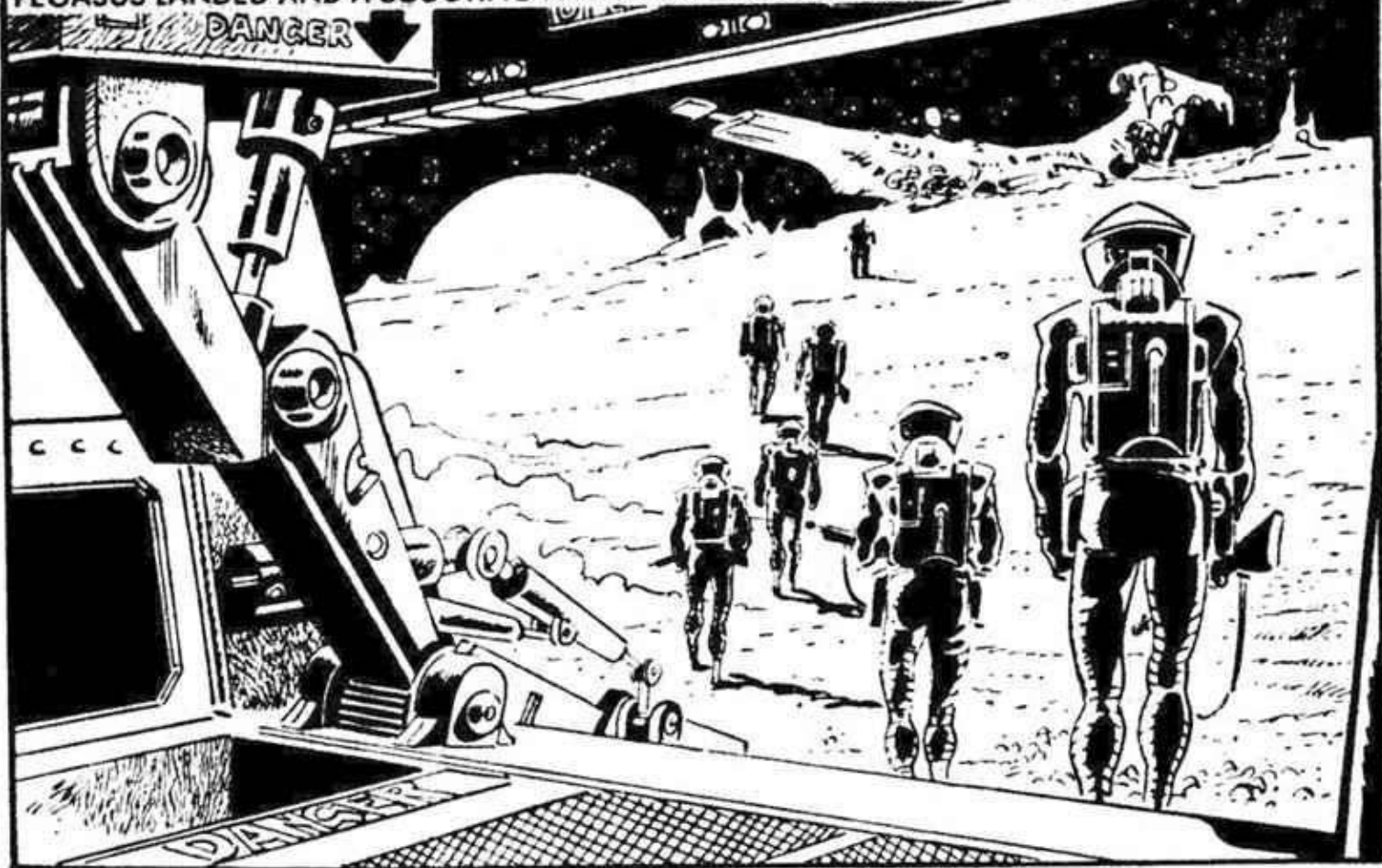


NO SIGN OF SURVIVORS. I
RECOMMEND CAUTION,
CAPTAIN. THE DISTRESS
SIGNAL MIGHT HAVE BEEN A FAKE—
TO LURE US DOWN HERE.



WHEN I WANT YOUR ADVICE I'LL ASK FOR IT.
LET'S GET OUT THERE AND TAKE A LOOK.

PEGASUS LANDED AND A SCOUTING PARTY HEADED FOR THE SILENT WRECK.



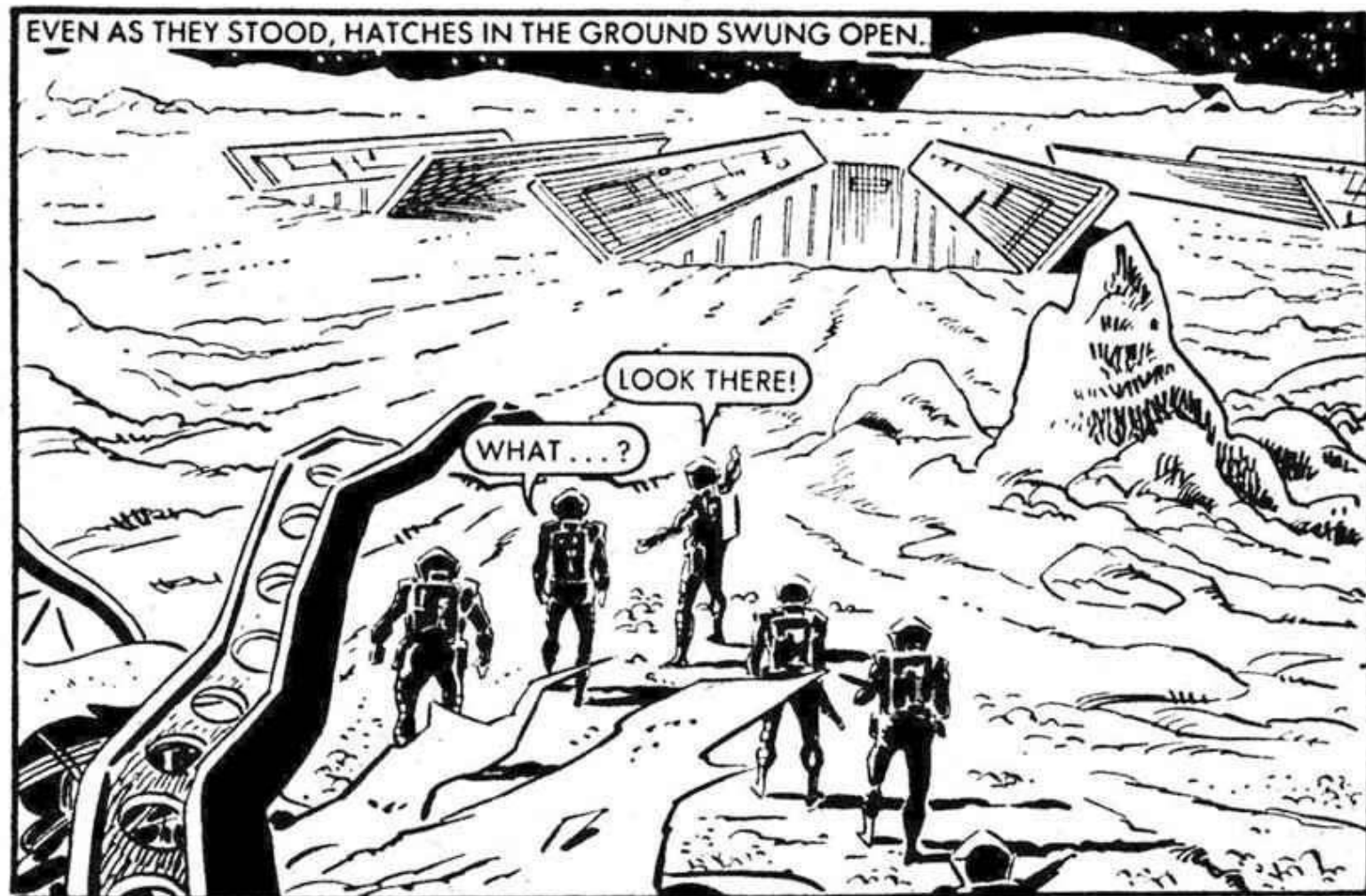
THERE IS NO ONE HERE.

SOMEBODY SENT THAT DISTRESS
CALL ... SEARCH PROPERLY.





EVEN AS THEY STOOD, HATCHES IN THE GROUND SWUNG OPEN.




ALIEN WARCRRAFT BLASTED SKYWARD.




BEFORE THE DISORGANISED CREW COULD MAN THE GUNS, THE FIRST WARCRAFT OPENED FIRE.



THE DESTRUCTION OF THE ALMOST
HELPLESS PEGASUS WAS WATCHED
WITH SATISFACTION.



SO PERISH ALL WHO
APPROACH THIS PLANET.



SOON WE WILL BE READY TO UNLEASH A WARFLEET
THAT EVEN THE MIGHTLY GALACTIC
FEDERATION WILL BE UNABLE TO TAME! WE SHALL RULE
THE UNIVERSE.

CAPTAIN NEVE KNEW PEGASUS WAS DOOMED.

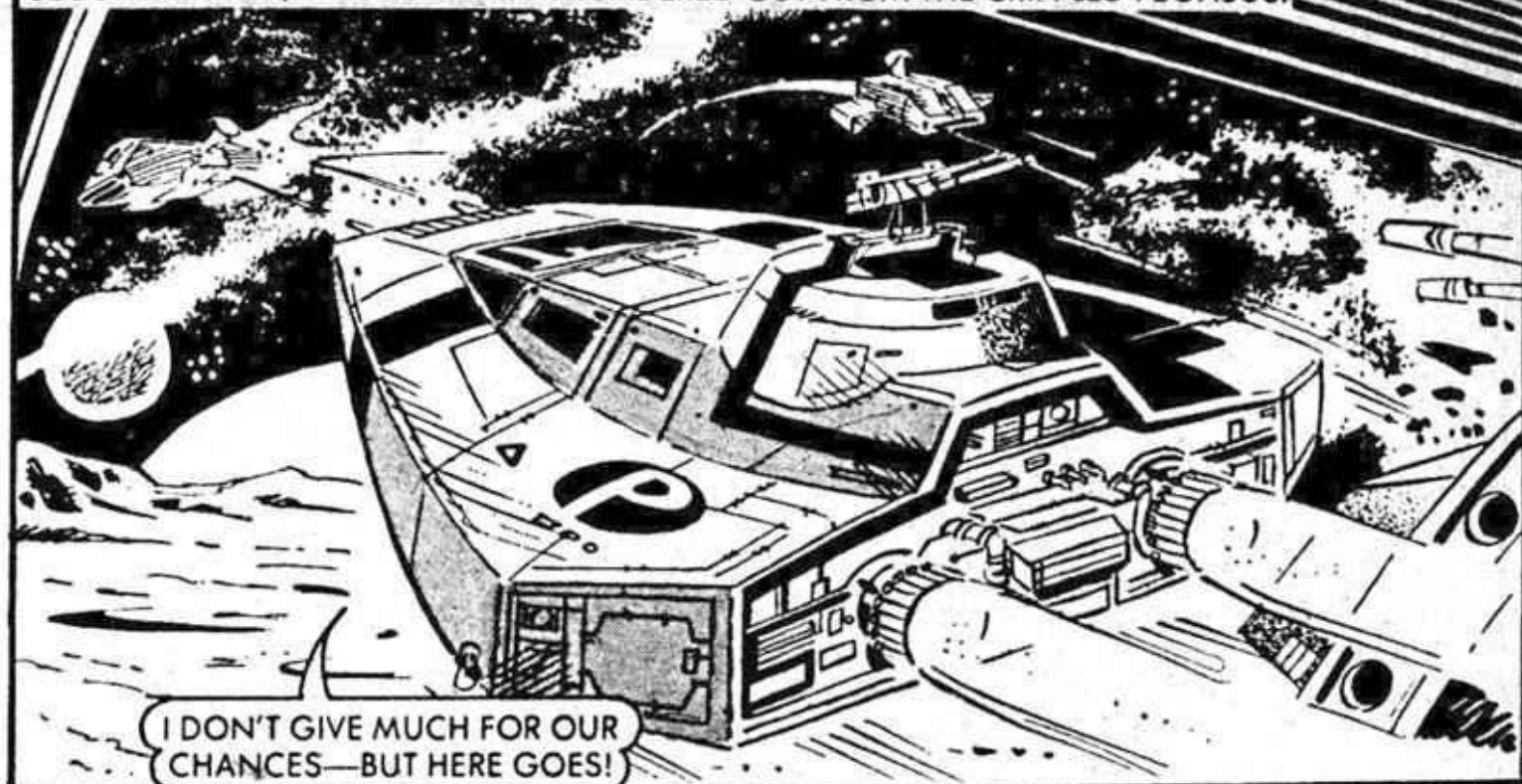


YOUR ONLY CHANCE IS TO TRY AND
ESCAPE IN ONE OF THE
SCOUTCRAFT. GET THE MEN
TOGETHER AND GO! I'LL TAKE OVER
HERE.

IT WAS MY ERROR OF
JUDGEMENT THAT GOT US
INTO THIS SPOT. YOU'LL
OBEY MY ORDERS, DAVIS. GET
A SCOUTCRAFT AND GO!
UNDERSTOOD!



SECONDS LATER, A SCOUTCRAFT THUNDERED OUT FROM THE CRIPPLED PEGASUS.

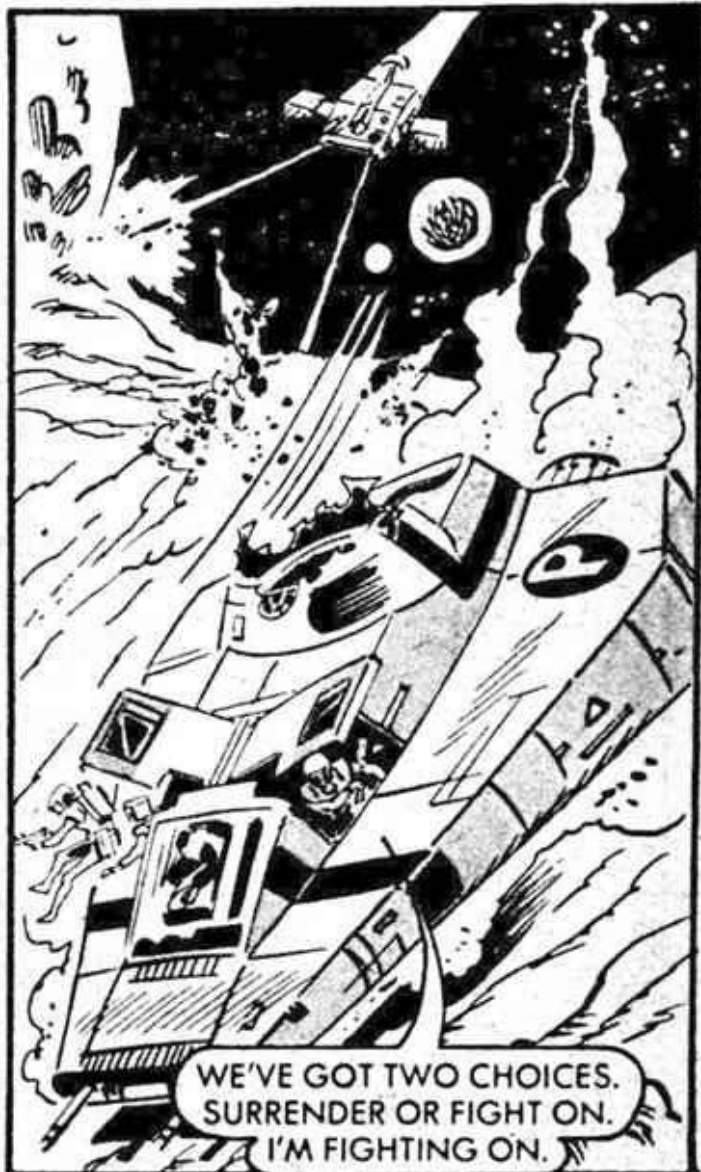


I DON'T GIVE MUCH FOR OUR CHANCES—BUT HERE GOES!



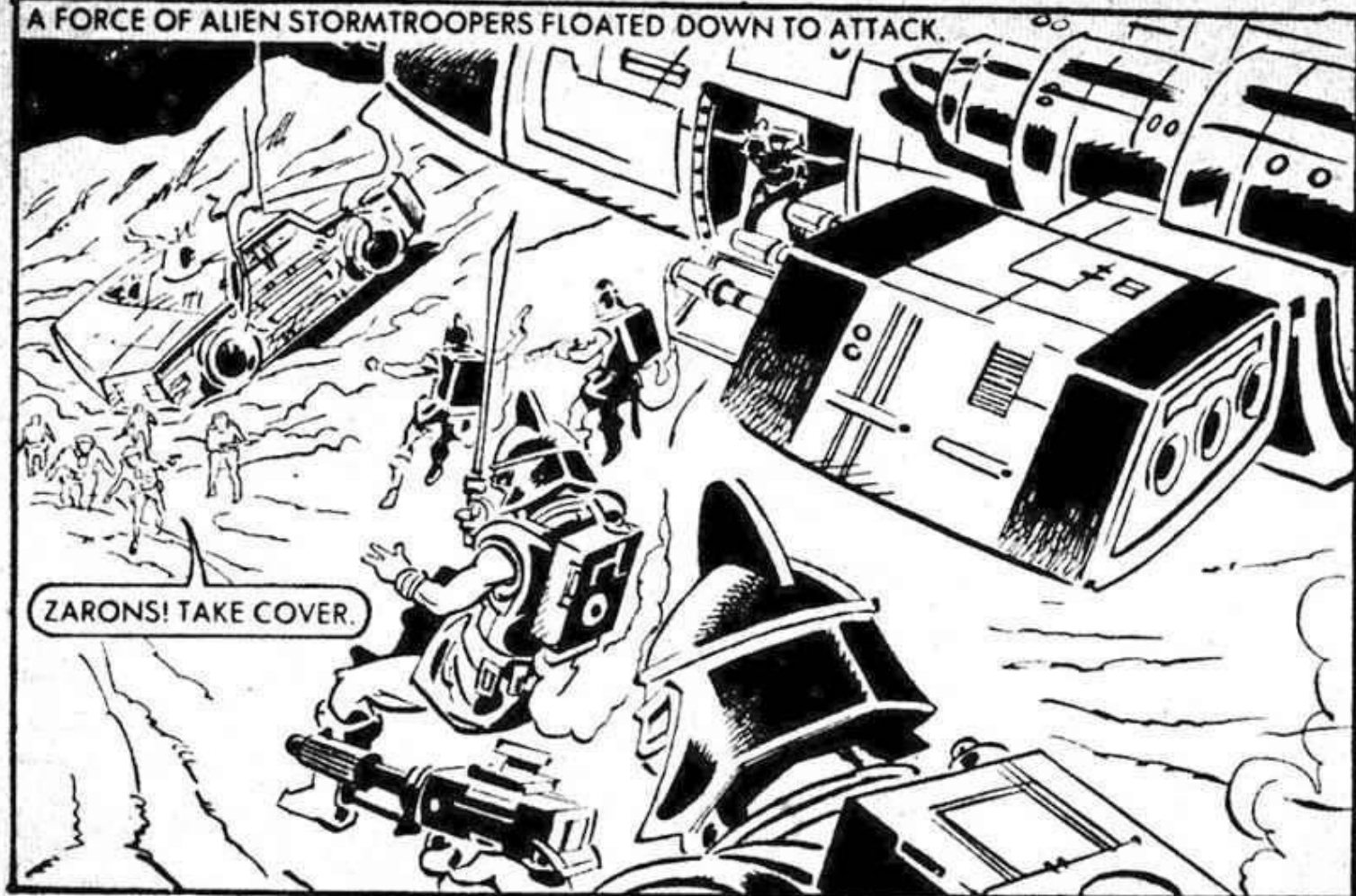
UPPER GUN HIT!

THE CONTROLS HAVE GONE.
WE'LL HAVE TO LAND.



WE'VE GOT TWO CHOICES.
SURRENDER OR FIGHT ON.
I'M FIGHTING ON.

A FORCE OF ALIEN STORMTROOPERS FLOATED DOWN TO ATTACK.





DOWN YOU GO, ORG. I'LL
BE RIGHT BEHIND YOU.



THEY SOON LOST THEIR PURSUERS IN THE
HONEYCOMB OF TUNNELS.



THERE'S LIGHT DOWN HERE!

IT'S CAUSED BY
PHOSPHORESCENT MOSS
WHICH GROWS ON THE
ROCKS.

WE'RE SAFE ENOUGH FOR THE
TIME BEING.

OUR ATTACKERS WERE ZARON
WARRIORS. THEY HAVE WARCRRAFT HERE
ON THIS PLANET. DO YOU SEE WHAT
THIS MEANS?

THE ZARONS WERE AT WAR WITH EVERY OTHER PLANET IN THIS STARGROUP UNTIL THE GALACTIC FEDERATION STEPPED IN.

AND THE FEDERATION BANNED THE ZARONS FROM PRODUCING WEAPONS OF WAR. THE STARGROUP HAS BEEN AT PEACE EVER SINCE.



IT SEEMS THAT THE ZARONS ARE PREPARING FOR FURTHER BLOODSHED. ANY SPACECRAFT IN THE AREA ARE DESTROYED JUST IN CASE THEY'VE LEARNED THE ZARONS' SECRET.



WE'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY TO WARN THE GALACTIC FEDERATION OF THE DANGER.



FIRST WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF THIS MAZE. STAY HERE—I'M GOING TO SEE WHERE THIS TUNNEL LEADS.

THE TUNNEL OPENED OUT INTO A HUGE CAVERN.

WHAT A SIZE! BUT
THERE'S NO WAY OUT.



AS DAVIS PASSED A GULLY, THE RAGGED
WATCHER LEAPT AT HIM.


DIE, ZARON!





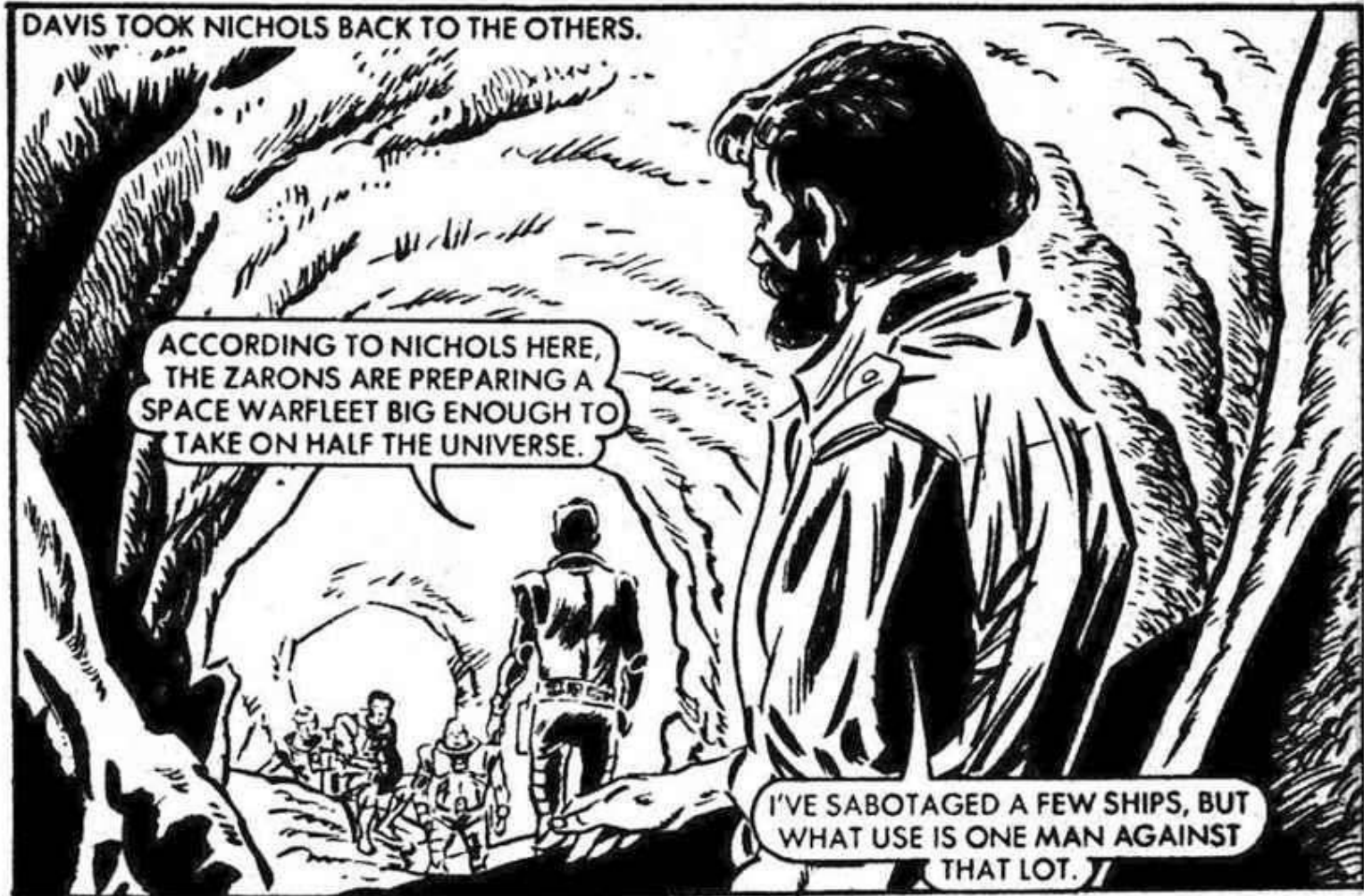
THE MAN EXPLAINED THAT HE WAS A SURVIVOR FROM THE ILL-FATED STARFIRE.

I'M TOM NICHOLS. WE WERE LURED TO KORAD BY A DISTRESS SIGNAL. NEXT THINK WE WERE BLASTED. I MANAGED TO GET AWAY AND I'VE LIVED DOWN HERE EVER SINCE.



DAVIS TOOK NICHOLS BACK TO THE OTHERS.

ACCORDING TO NICHOLS HERE, THE ZARONS ARE PREPARING A SPACE WARFLEET BIG ENOUGH TO TAKE ON HALF THE UNIVERSE.



I'VE SABOTAGED A FEW SHIPS, BUT WHAT USE IS ONE MAN AGAINST THAT LOT.

NICHOLS KNEW THE MAZE OF PASSAGES AND TUNNELS LIKE THE BACK OF HIS HAND.

THE OTHER SURVIVORS FROM STARFIRE AND THE OTHER SHIPS LURED DOWN TO KORAD, HAVE BEEN PUT TO WORK BY THE ZARONS.

NICHOLS LED THEM TO ONE OF THE ZARON WAR PRODUCTION AREAS.



THIS IS ONE OF THE SMALLER CAVERNS THEY'RE USING. THERE ARE HUNDREDS MORE, ALL OVER THE PLANET.

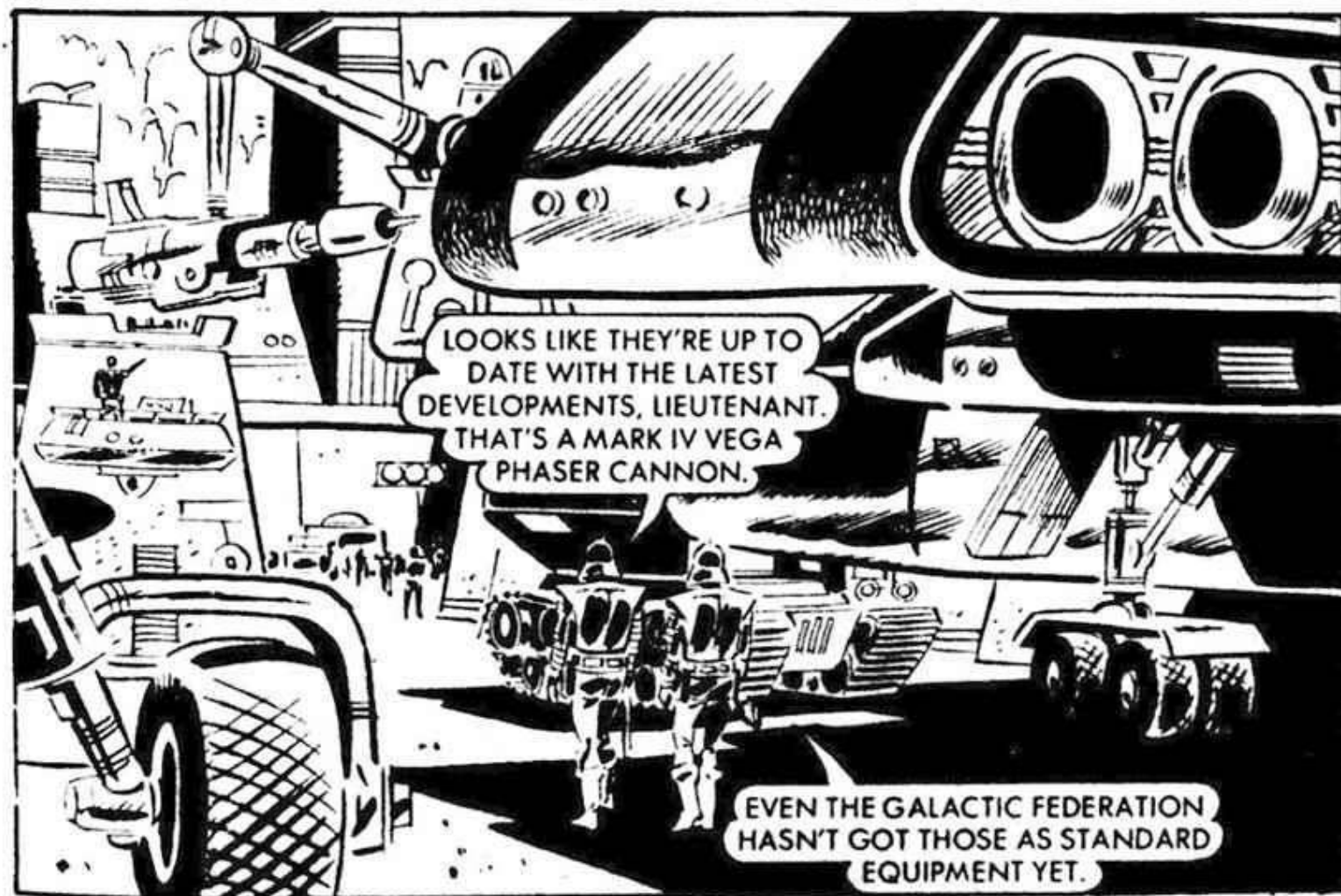
DAVIS DECIDED TO HAVE A CLOSER LOOK.



DAVIS AND BLAKE WORKED WITH DEADLY EFFICIENCY.

FIRST WE'RE GOING
TO NEED UNIFORMS!







IT'S UNBELIEVABLE! NICHOLS
SAID THERE ARE A HUNDRED
MORE CAVERNS LIKE THIS.
THERE'LL BE NO WAR—JUST A
MASSACRE.



THOSE MEN MUST BE WHAT'S LEFT
OF THE CREWS OF THE SPACE-
CRAFT THE ZARONS LURED DOWN.



BEFORE DAVIS COULD PREVENT HIM, BLAKE LEAPT FORWARD TO DEFEND THE CREWMAN.



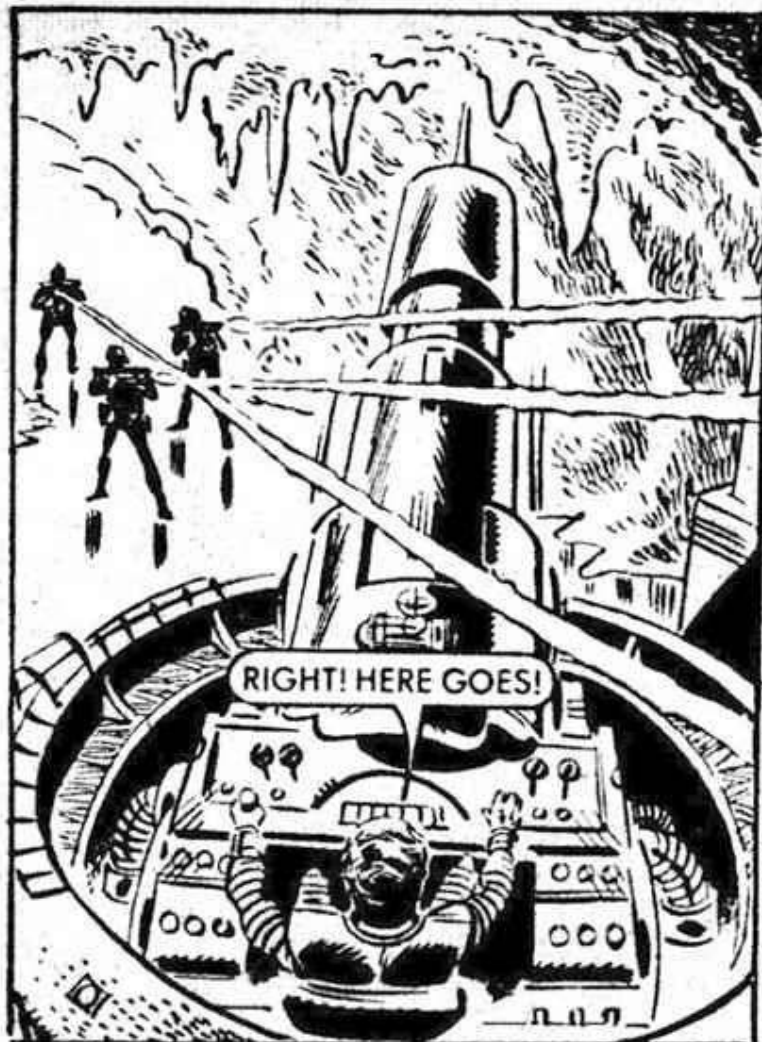




DAVIS JUMPED FOR THE ANTI-GRAV PLATFORM THAT WAS CARRYING A MARK IV VEGA PHASER.

LET'S HOPE IT'S
IN WORKING ORDER!








DAVIS AND BLAKE WERE LED BACK INTO THE CAVERN AND TAKEN TO THE CELL BLOCK.










GRAB SOME WEAPONS AND
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

CAPTAIN NEVE. I AM
GLAD TO FIND YOU UNHARMED.

THE ZARON EXECUTION SQUAD ARRIVED TO COLLECT THE PRISONERS.



THE PRISONERS
ARE ESCAPING!



WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO FIGHT
OUR WAY THROUGH!

NO WE WON'T. THERE'S
ANOTHER WAY OUT.



BUT EVEN IN THE MAZE OF CAVERNS, THEY COULDN'T SHAKE OFF THEIR ZARON PURSUERS.

THEY'RE GAINING ON US. OUR BEST
BET IS TO SPLIT UP. DAVIS, BLAKE,
DOWN HERE WITH ME.



THE TUNNEL ENDED ABRUPTLY IN A HUGE CAVERN.



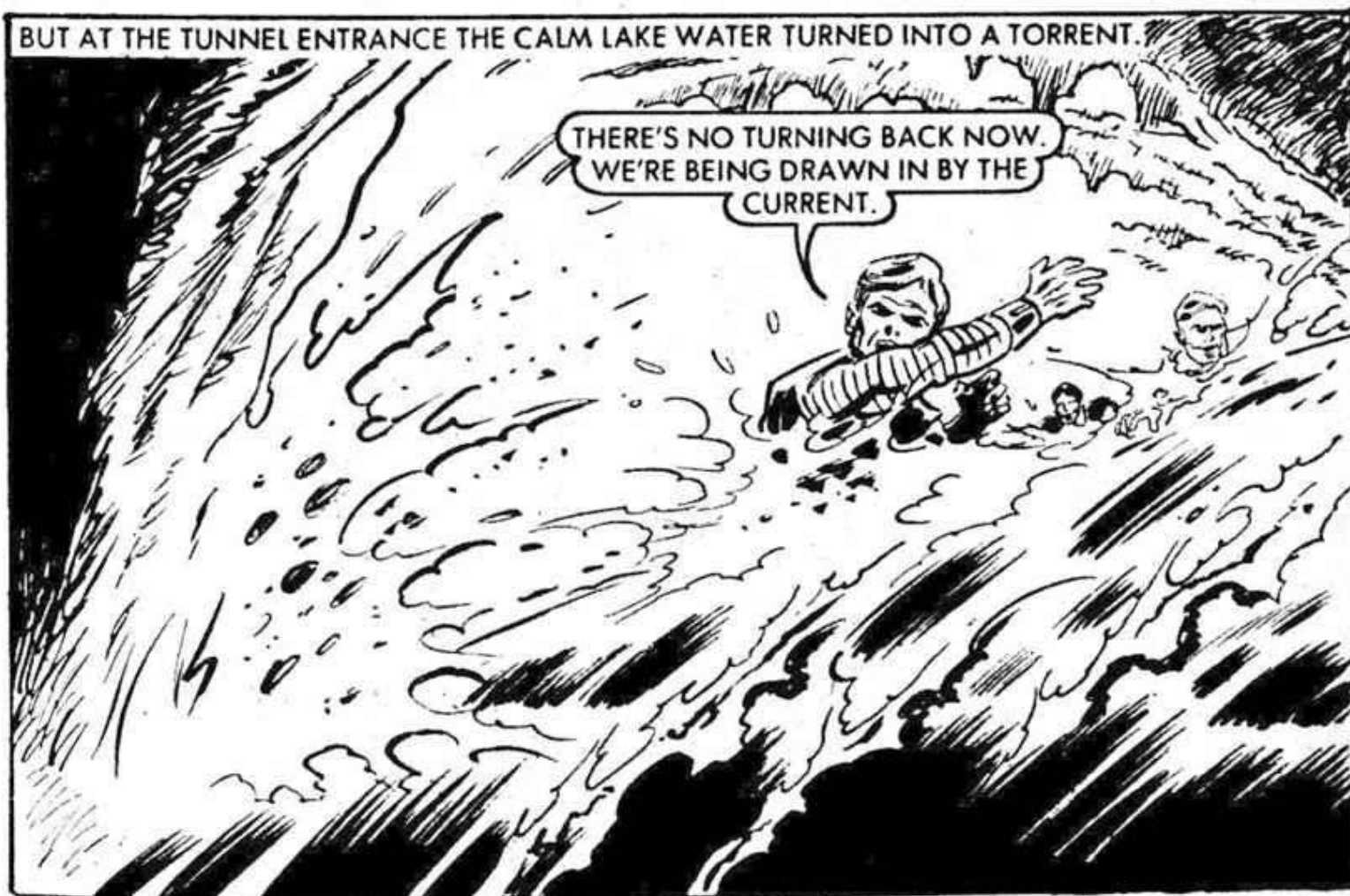
NEVE'S FIRING HAD WOKEN THE BATS.







BUT AT THE TUNNEL ENTRANCE THE CALM LAKE WATER TURNED INTO A TORRENT.



THE THREE MEN WERE HELPLESS IN THE RUSHING WATER.



THEY SURFACED IN AN UNDERGROUND RIVER.



THE BANK IS SMOOTH. THERE'S
NOWHERE TO GET A GRIP.

CAN'T ... HOLD ON ... MUCH
LONGER. CURRENT ... TOO
STRONG ...

ZARONS APPEARED ON THE BANK.





THE ZARONS MADE NO MOVE TO ASSIST THEM.



NICHOLS HAD LEAD THE OTHERS TO THE SAME SPOT.

WE'LL HAVE YOU OUT OF THERE
IN A MINUTE.



CAN'T REACH...

THE EXHAUSTED CAPTAIN NEVE GRATEFULLY SEIZED THE REACHING ARM OF MENKAR ORG.

THANKS, ORG. I COULDN'T
HAVE HELD ON ANY LONGER.



THE ZARONS WILL BE EXPECTING US TO BE
HIDING IN THE TUNNELS. THE PLACE THEY WON'T
EXPECT US IS IN THE WARCAFT CAVERN.

WHAT DO WE WANT TO
GO BACK THERE FOR?





NICHOLS' KNOWLEDGE OF THE MAZE OF TUNNELS GOT THEM BACK TO THE WARCAFT CAVERN WITHOUT BEING SPOTTED BY THE SEARCHING ZARONS.

WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAN TWO WARCAFT.

WHY DON'T WE JUST TAKE ONE SHIP?

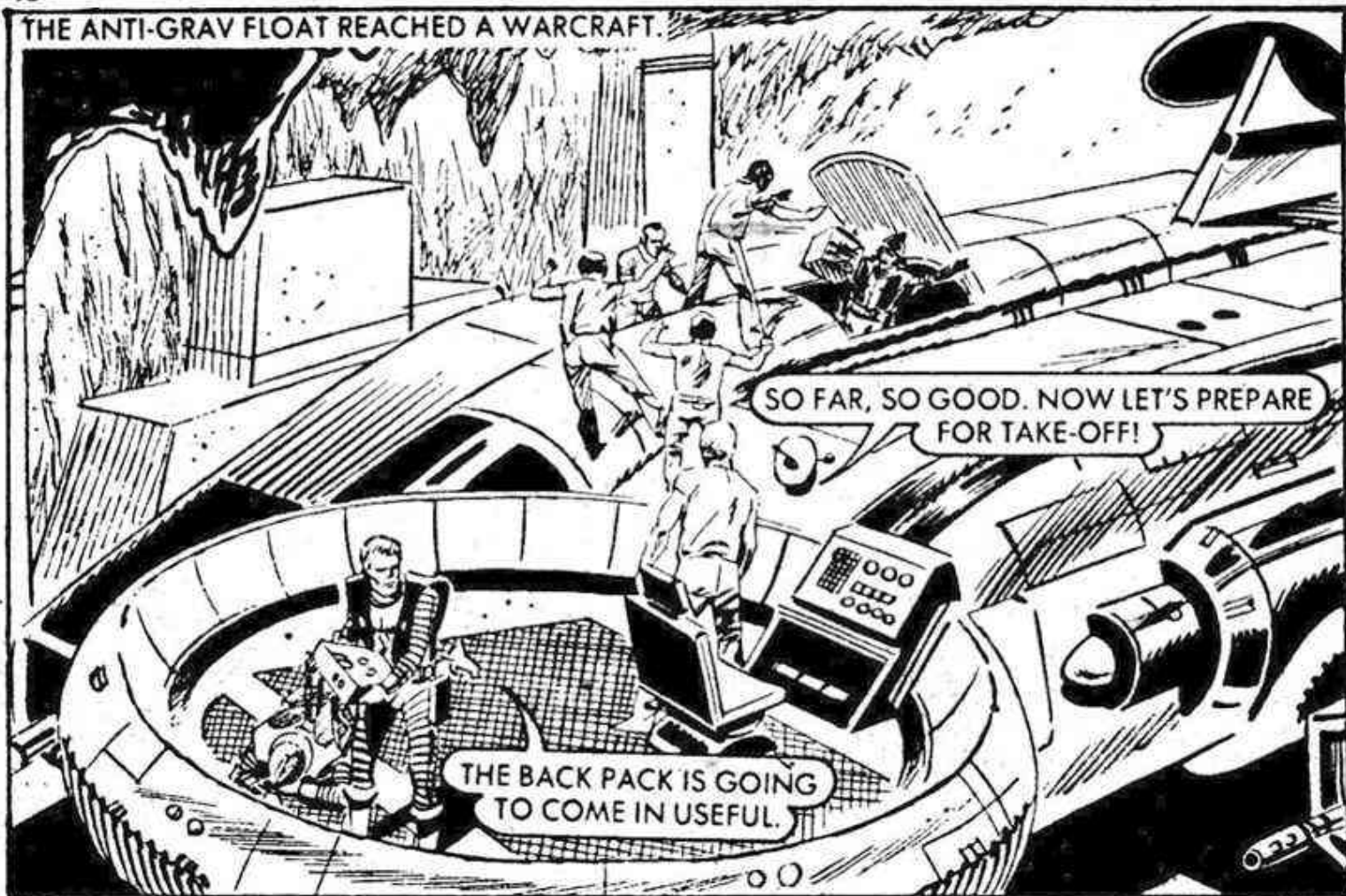
WE NEED ONE SHIP TO GET ABOVE THE ZARON FORCEFIELD TO ALERT THE GALACTIC FEDERATION FLEET. THE OTHER MUST TRY TO STOP THE ZARONS FROM FOLLOWING IT.

AND THAT'LL BE SUICIDE. IT'S THE ONLY WAY. I WILL COMMAND THE SECOND SHIP.





THE ANTI-GRAV FLOAT REACHED A WARCRAFT.



WITHIN MINUTES THE CRAFT WAS THROBBING AS THE MAIN THRUST MOTORS THUNDERED INTO LIFE.







DAVIS WAS TOO LATE TO STOP THE ALARM.

IT'S THE EARTHMAN!

LOOKS LIKE I'LL HAVE TO
DO IT THE HARD WAY!



TAKE THAT.



PRECIOUS MOMENTS PASSED AS DAVIS
ATTEMPTED TO FIGURE OUT THE CONTROLS.

DONE IT!



COMMENCE TAKE-OFF!
DESTROY THE REMAINING
WARCRAFT! YOU'VE GOT
30 SECONDS TO GET HERE,
DAVIS. I CAN'T DELAY ANY
LONGER.

FOOLS! THEY WON'T GET FAR. THE
WHOLE OF KORAD HAS BEEN
ALERTED!

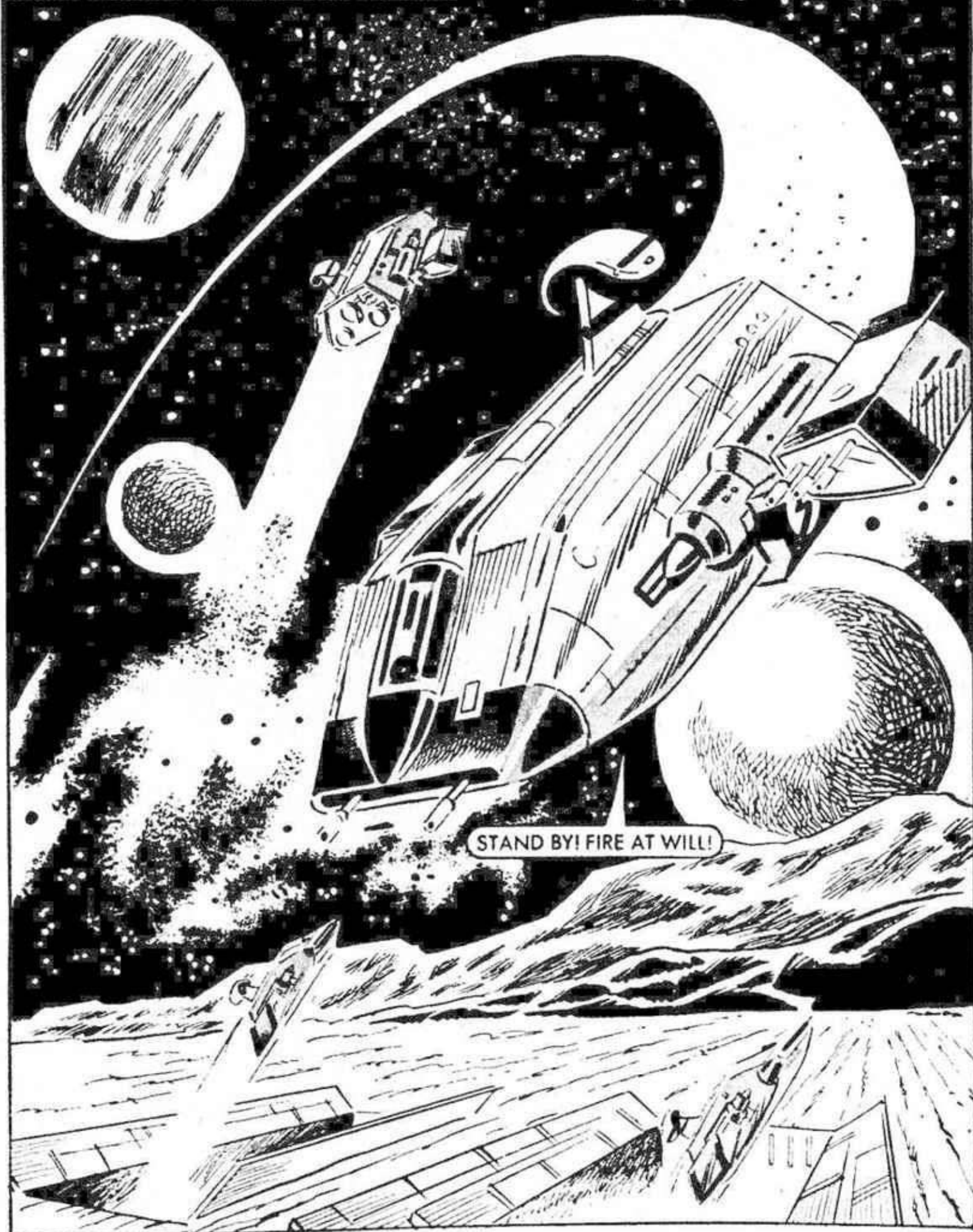
DAVIS MADE IT WITH SECONDS TO SPARE.

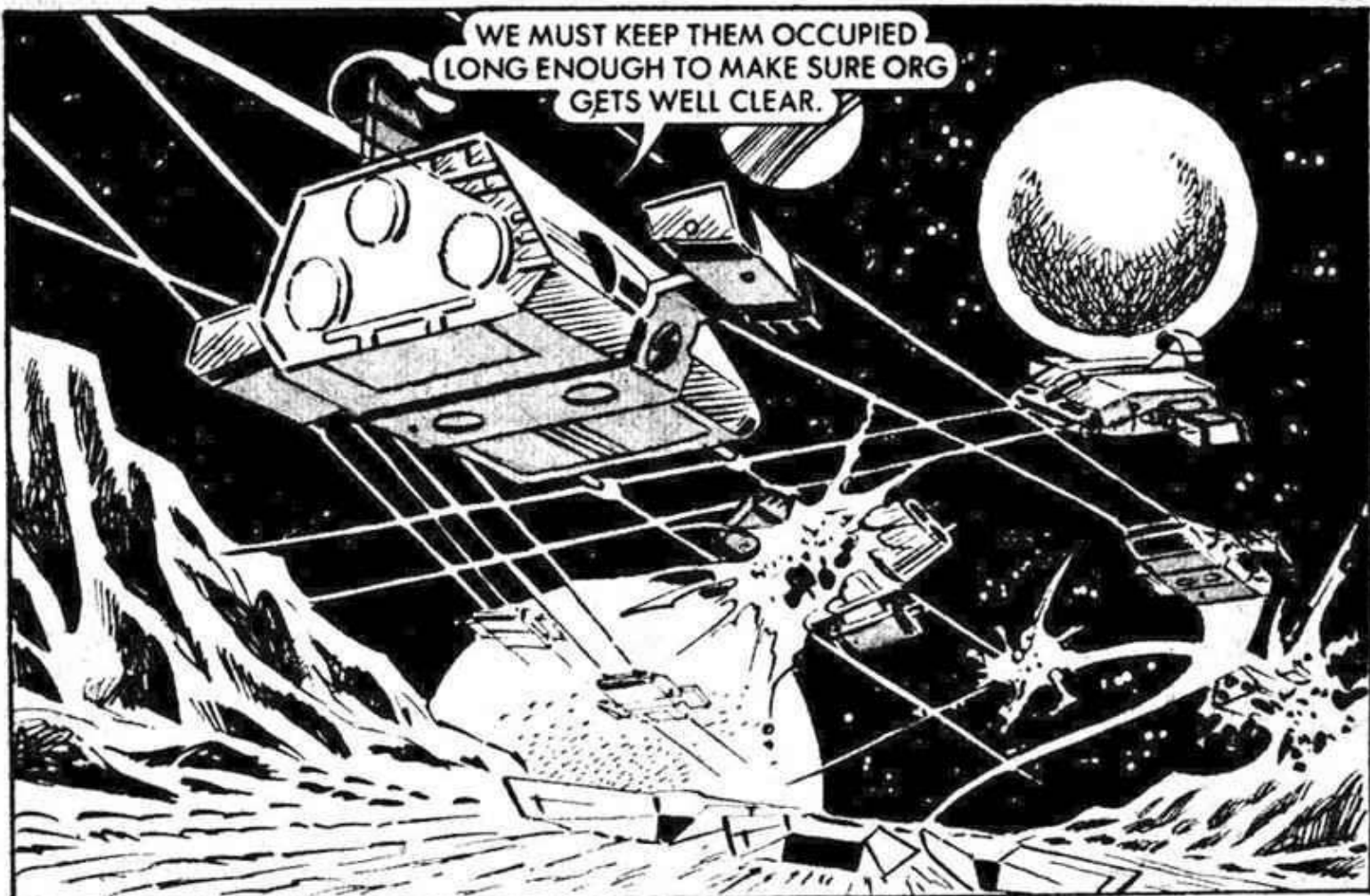
YOU'RE HERE . . . BLAST OFF!



THERE GOES ORG! LET'S HOPE HE
MAKES CONTACT WITH THE
GALACTIC FLEET.

ALL OVER KORAD HIDDEN DOORS OPENED AND
ZARON WARCRRAFT BLASTED OUT IN PURSUIT.





THE STOLEN WARCRAFT TOOK HIT AFTER HIT.

WE'VE BEEN HIT, SIR. MAIN PHASERS
OUT OF ACTION!

ORG SHOULD BE CLEAR BY NOW. WE'LL
TRY AND MAKE A RUN FOR IT!

THE WARCRAFT WARPED AWAY FROM KORAD.

THE MOTORS CAN'T
SUSTAIN THIS KIND
OF PRESSURE, CAPTAIN!

THEY'RE GOING TO HAVE
TO. IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE!

TRY AS THEY WOULD, THEY COULDN'T
THROW OFF THEIR PURSUERS.



MORE POWER!

THERE ISN'T ANY MORE, SIR.
THE MAIN POWER SOURCE IS
ALREADY OVERLOADED.



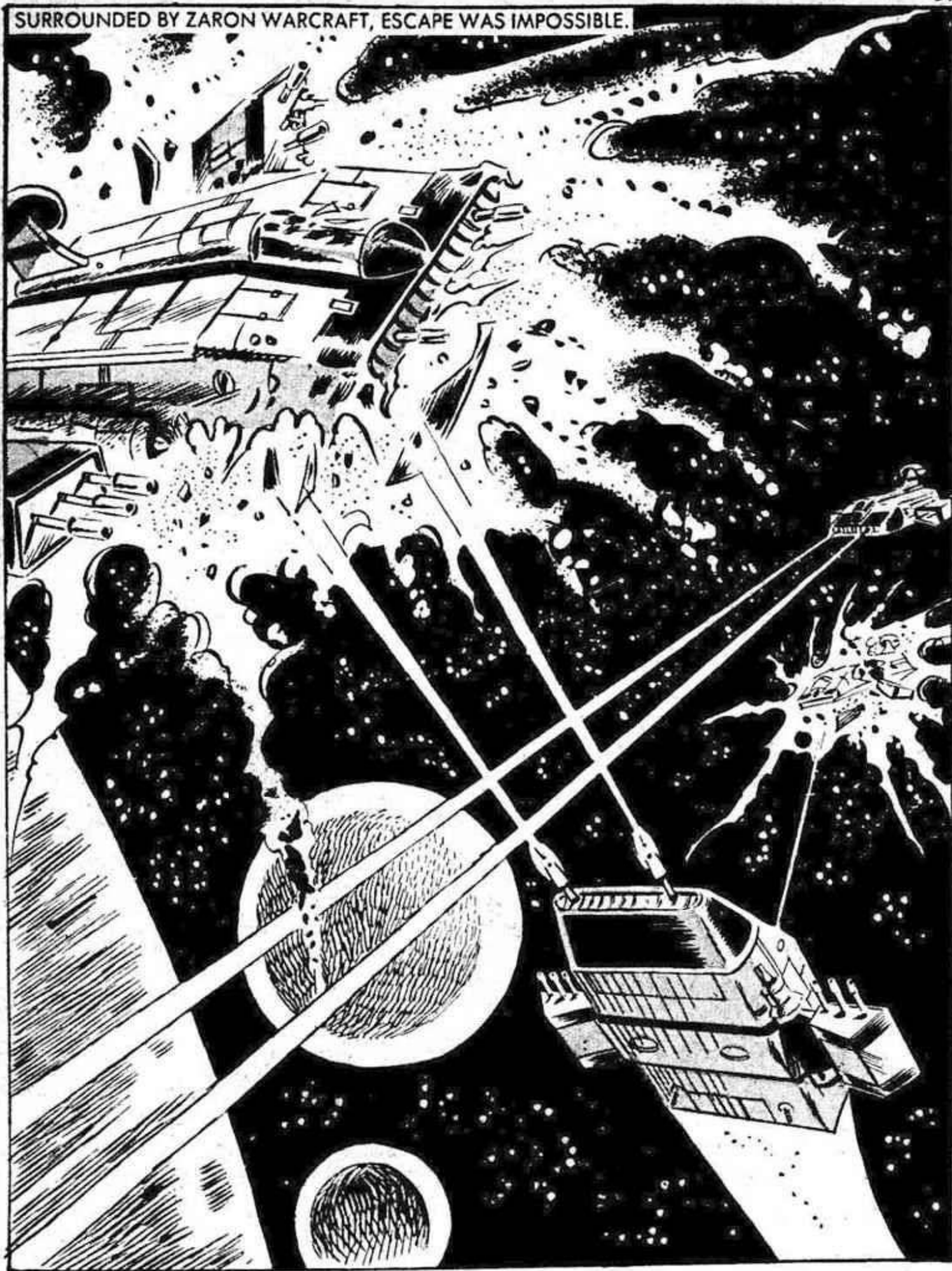


ORG MANOEUVRED HIS CRAFT ALONGSIDE CAPTAIN NEVE'S BATTERED SHIP.

WELCOME ABOARD, CAPTAIN.



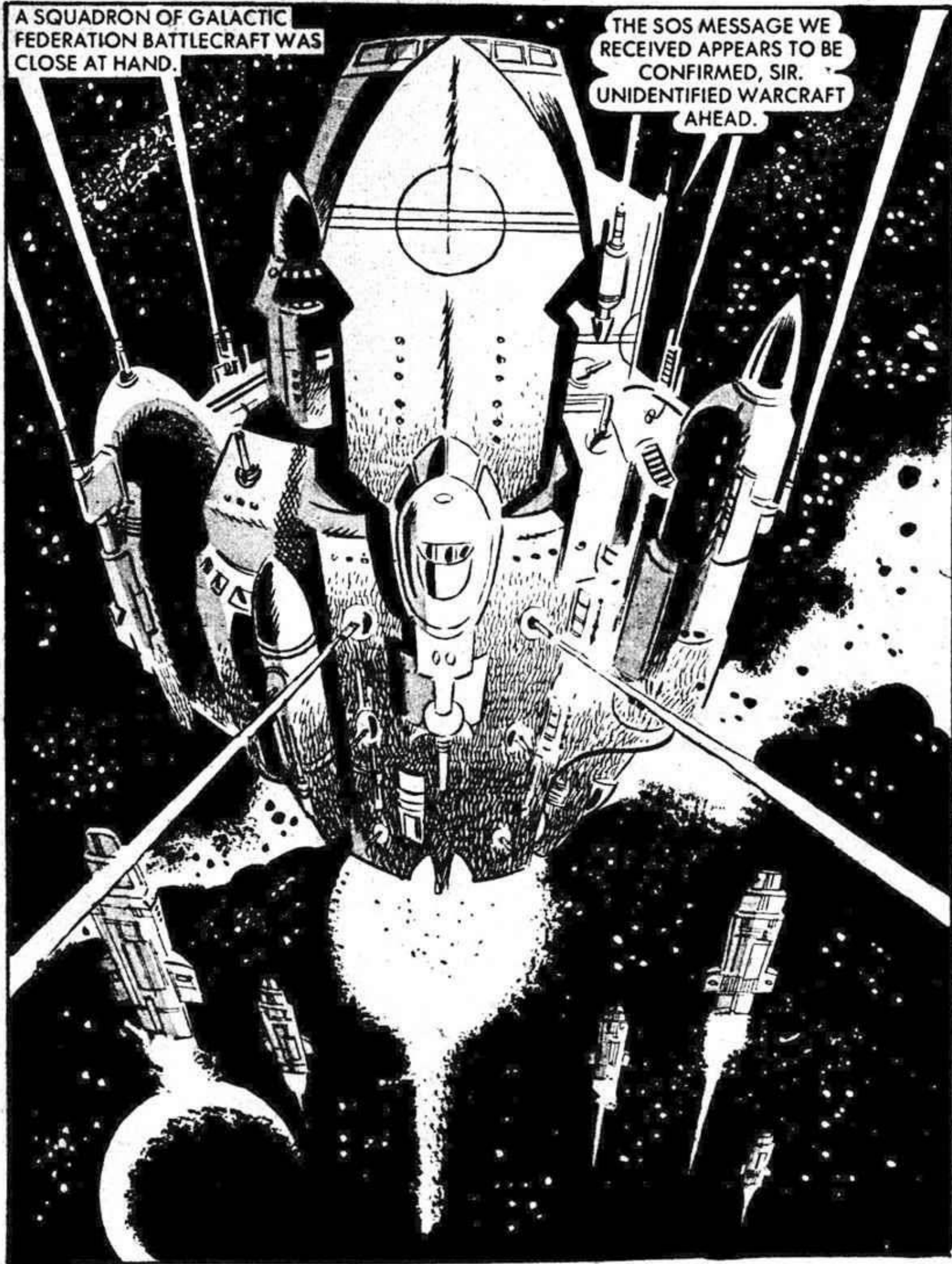
SURROUNDED BY ZARON WARCRAFT, ESCAPE WAS IMPOSSIBLE.





A SQUADRON OF GALACTIC
FEDERATION BATTLECRAFT WAS
CLOSE AT HAND.

THE SOS MESSAGE WE
RECEIVED APPEARS TO BE
CONFIRMED, SIR.
UNIDENTIFIED WARCRRAFT
AHEAD.



THE BATTLECRAFT SWEEP INTO ACTION!

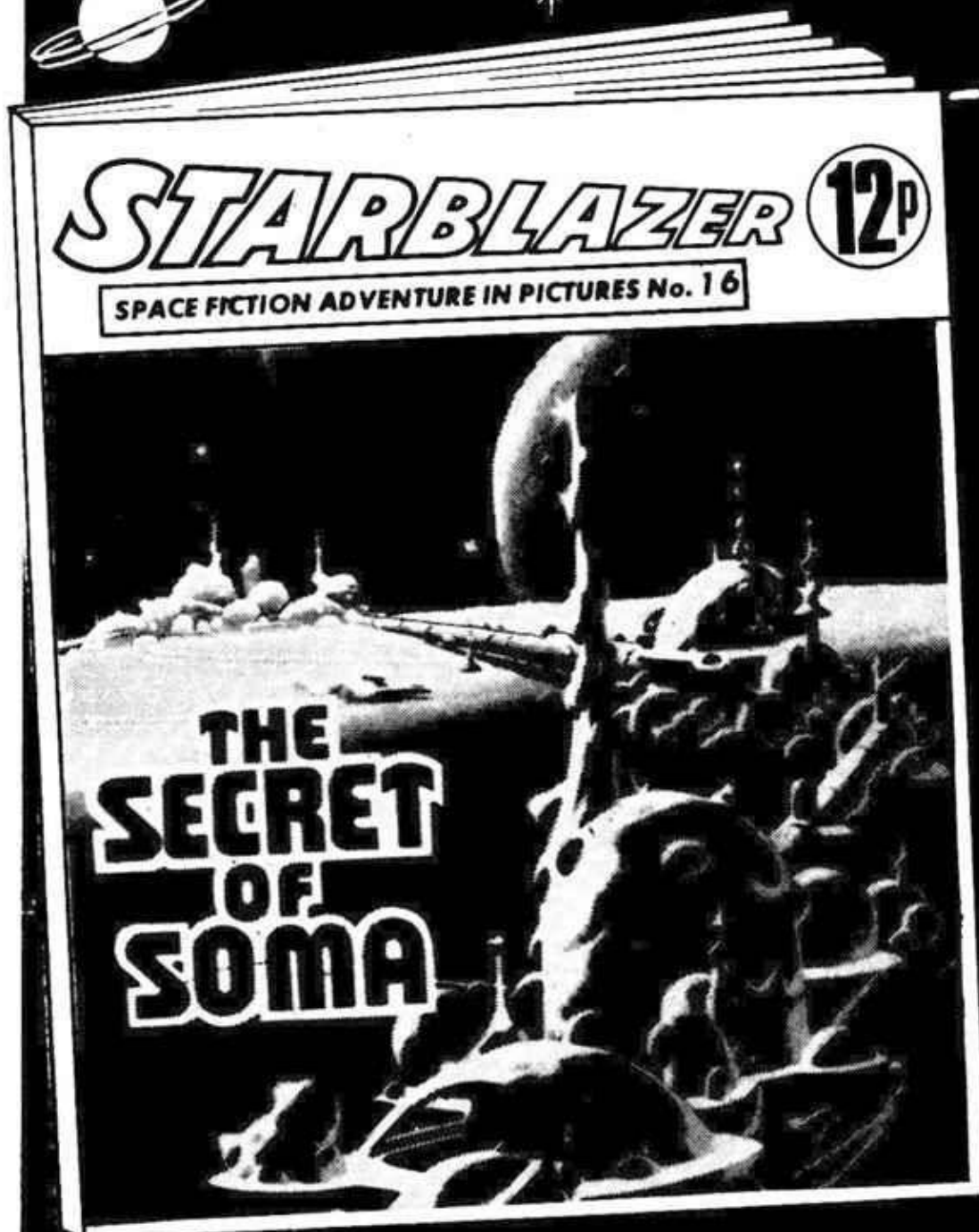




AS NEVE, DAVIS AND ORG SPED HOME, THE ETHER WINDS OF SPACE GENTLY BLEW OVER THE SILENT, DEAD CAVERNS OF KORAD. NOW, THERE WAS NO LIFE ON KORAD AND THE THREAT TO EARTH WAS NO MORE



DON'T MISS THIS MONTH'S OTHER ACTION-PACKED ADVENTURE



ON SALE
AT YOUR
NEWS-
AGENT'S

NOW!

A black and white photograph of the Mariner 4 spacecraft in orbit above the surface of Mars. The spacecraft is a complex structure with multiple solar panel arrays extended from a central body. The surface of Mars is visible in the lower half of the frame, showing rugged terrain with craters and ridges. The background is the dark, star-filled void of space.

STARBLAZERS

IN THE CONQUEST (17)
OF SPACE

On 28th November 1964, one of the most remarkable American spacecraft was launched from Cape Kennedy. It was a space probe, Mariner 4, which in July 1965 took the first close up photos of Mars. The photos surprised scientists who detected craters and canyons which looked very like the lunar surface.